



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grant Meeting in Sidney**

**Sidney, Neb., Jan. 18, 2006** –Ag producers and small businesses are encouraged to attend the January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 p.m. MT informational meeting to discuss value-added opportunities available via the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. The Cheyenne County Extension Service, the South Platte Natural Resource District, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development will host the meeting at the Natural Resource District Building, Park 1 Drive in Sidney.

Meeting is highly recommended to agricultural producers, agricultural producer groups, farm and ranch cooperatives and majority controlled producer-based business ventures for use in value-added agriculture projects. Attendees will become familiar with the value-added program eligibility requirements and will be guided through the application process.

Value-added producer grants may be used to fund one of the following two: (1) planning activities needed to establish a viable value-added marketing opportunity for an agricultural product (e.g. conduct a feasibility study, develop a business or marketing plan); or (2) acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture that will allow producers to better compete in domestic and international markets.

Statewide, value-added grants totaling \$1,113,540 assisted 16 producers in value-added ventures in Fiscal Year 2005. The 2002 Farm Bill made available monies for the USDA Rural Development VAPG program. Since the beginning of the program, Nebraska has received over \$7.7 million assisting in 54 value-added ventures.

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